BEFORE THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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In the Matter of	)	
Re: Delete, Delete, Delete	)	GN Docket No. 25-133
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To the Commission:

Pursuant to the Public Notice released March 12, 2025 (DA 25-219), I respectfully submit the following comments regarding the need to revise the Commission's practices and rules concerning non-commercial FM translator application procedures, specifically the reliance on infrequent and irregular filing windows as the exclusive mechanism for accepting new applications.

I. Summary of Request

I urge the Commission to consider either of the following deregulatory actions:

1. Eliminate the requirement for filing windows altogether and transition to a rolling or periodic application process, with built-in safeguards for mutual exclusivity; or
2. Establish a regular, recurring schedule for FM translator filing windows (e.g., annually or biannually), thus improving transparency, fairness, and access—particularly for small and local applicants.

Ridgeline Radio, Inc. is the licensee of KRDF, serving the community of Red Feather Lakes, Colorado. As a small, community-based broadcaster, our ability to expand our service area—and thereby reach a core segment of our intended audience—is currently constrained by the lack of available non-commercial FM translator filing opportunities. The unpredictable and infrequent nature of filing windows means that vital geographic areas we hope to serve remain inaccessible. This directly affects our revenue potential and our mission to provide meaningful local service.

II. Legal and Regulatory Background

There is no statutory requirement that mandates the use of application filing windows for FM translator licenses. The current practice arises from administrative discretion under the Commission's rules, particularly:

- 47 CFR § 74.1233 (Processing FM translator and booster station applications), which outlines comparative procedures and assumptions based on the window model.

To implement either of the changes proposed herein, the Commission could amend § 74.1233 and related procedural rules to support rolling application acceptance or codify a fixed filing schedule.

Such changes would be consistent with the Commission's statutory authority under 47 U.S.C. §§ 151, 157, and 163, which collectively direct the agency to:

- Promote the "efficient" and "nation-wide" use of radio communication services;
- Encourage the provision of new technologies and services to the public;
- Identify and remove regulatory barriers that hinder entry or expansion, particularly by small businesses.

Additionally, 5 U.S.C. § 553(e) of the Administrative Procedure Act authorizes this type of request for rule amendment.

III. Cost-Benefit and Marketplace Considerations

As the Public Notice encourages commenters to analyze cost-benefit impacts, I submit that the current filing window regime imposes significant and unnecessary costs, including:

- Administrative burden on applicants, who must maintain readiness indefinitely, often with minimal notice;
- Resource inefficiencies, as potential applicants must monitor Commission activity for years with no certainty of opportunity;
- Market distortion, as entities with insider access or specialized counsel are disproportionately advantaged;
- Harm to localism and diversity, because community broadcasters—especially nonprofit, LPFM-adjacent, or underserved market entities—struggle to compete in unpredictable filing windows.

For broadcasters like Ridgeline Radio, Inc., these constraints translate directly into lost revenue opportunities. Without access to a translator to serve geographically adjacent communities that fall just outside our primary contour, we are unable to deliver our programming to listeners who are part of our intended service area. This suppresses listener growth, reduces potential underwriting or sponsorship opportunities, and limits our ability to engage with the local business community. The absence of predictable access to translator filings creates not only technical but **economic inefficiencies** that disproportionately harm small and rural broadcasters.

Conversely, adopting a predictable or continuous application process would:

- Reduce speculative behavior and last-minute filings;
- Promote better technical planning and spectrum efficiency;
- Lower entry barriers for community-focused and small broadcasters;
- Allow the Commission to better manage workflow via steady rather than episodic application intake.

IV. Experience and Waiver History

In practice, FM translator filing windows have been:

- Rare (not held on a predictable cadence);
- Disproportionately oversubscribed (creating long comparative and processing delays);
- The subject of numerous waivers and temporary freezes, suggesting the existing rules are not functioning optimally and are often impractical or ill-suited to real-world conditions.

This history provides strong justification for the Commission to reevaluate the underlying rules and either repeal the reliance on window-based applications or modernize the approach through periodic scheduling.

V. Recommendation

I respectfully recommend that the Commission:

- Initiate a rulemaking to amend 47 CFR § 74.1233, either to eliminate the filing window requirement or require a recurring, publicized window schedule; and
- Consider these changes in the context of reducing regulatory burden, promoting localism and diversity, and facilitating market entry for small entities, consistent with the goals of the deregulatory initiative outlined in DA 25-219.

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